

Geography Division, ORR
Project Initiation Memorandum

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To: Chief, Geographic Research

Project No. 64.1330

From: Chief, Geography Division

Date: 29 September 55

1. Subject of Proposed Project: Geographic Appraisal of New Lands Program, USSR.

2. Statement of Problem: (See attached outline.)

a. Background: For many years the Soviet Five-Year Plans have included schemes for increasing the area of agricultural land by reclamation, development of new lands, and acclimitization of crops. Mention of such programs increased in 1954 until the present announcement of the grandiose program for bringing under cultivation large areas of idle or virgin lands in western Siberia and northern Kazakhstan and smaller scattered areas in the North Caucasus and eastern Siberia.

b. Problem: To analyze the resources of the virgin and idle lands referred to in the Soviet New Lands Program to determine their suitability to support gainful agriculture and probable degree of success as reflected by crop production in analogous regions of Canada.

3. Requester: Self-initiated. (See Comments below.) *MPB/RR 20.827*

4. Analysts: [REDACTED] USSR Branch

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5. Kind and Extent of Cooperation Desired from:

a. Other divisions of the Geographic Area: D/GC and D/GL

b. Other parts of CIA: M/AG, S/PM, S/TR

c. Outside CIA: Department of Agriculture, USGS, OIR-State, [REDACTED] information to be examined.

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d. D/GL domestic procurement: Obtain information on soils maps seen by US Agricultural delegation to the USSR.

6. Estimated Man Hours: 2,000 professional

7. Probable Completion Date: January 56

8. Probable Form of Final Publication: CIA/RR-G

9. Comments: This project will also support ORR Project No. 20.827.
See attached outline.

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Chief, Geography Division

Chief, Geographic Research

Date

Assistant Director, ORR

Date

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Geographic Appraisal of New Lands Program, USSR
(Outline)

I. Virgin lands and idle lands (marginal)

- A. Definition. "Idle lands" imply some were cultivated at one time and then abandoned -- reasons for abandonment.
- B. Location and approximate boundaries (as determined from Soviet sources and from estimates of physical factors such as isohyets, isotherms, and from vegetation zones).

II. Physical capabilities

A. Land potential in relation to possibilities for expansion of agriculture.

1. Relief

a. Relative proportion and distribution of plain, rolling land, and hills with average degrees of slope for each.

b. Estimates of percentage of land suitable for plowing, pasture, etc.

2. Soils

a. Relative proportion and distribution of individual soil types.

b. Discussion of the suitability of the various soil types for certain kinds of agriculture.

3. Hydrography and hydrology

a. Nature and density of the hydrographic net.

b. Depth of ground water table and recent trends.

c. Evaluation of water resources for expanded agriculture use.

B. Climate as a controlling factor in extending cultivation

1. Meteorological influences

2. Seasonal characteristics

a. Winter

b. Spring

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c. Summer

d. Fall

3. Agro-climatic analysis of production potential

a. Spring wheat

(1) Temperature

(2) Precipitation

(3) Wind

b. Corn

(1) Temperature

(2) Precipitation

c. Millet

d. Other crops

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III. Expansion of the transportation net -- a vital factor in the agricultural development of the new lands

A. Construction of new avenues for overland movement

1. New railroad lines and their significance to the overall program

a. Limited extension of broad gauge lines

b. Large-scale construction of narrow gauge lines (expediency)

2. Improvement and expansion of the road network.

B. Possible development of waterways for commercial transport

IV. Settlement structure in the development of the new lands

A. Present settlement pattern

1. Origins of settlement

2. Population distribution and density

3. Ethnic composition

4. Rural settlements (size, village type)

5. Urban centers and their significance in the new lands program.

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*suggest
treatment
only as related
to the problem.*

*All these
significant
to the problem?
Particularly
A1?*

B. Impact of the new lands program

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1. Official policy regarding settlement and construction (agrogorod)
2. New sovkhoz settlements
3. Expansion of present cities and towns
4. Changes in ethnic composition

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